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Chief Executive Officer

## County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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October 14, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Sachi A. Hamai   
Chief Executive Officer

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### **MOTION TO SEND FIVE-SIGNATURE LETTERS ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)-VETERANS AFFAIRS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING VOUCHERS TO HUD SECRETARY JULIAN CASTRO AND THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION (ITEM NO. 9, AGENDA OF OCTOBER 18, 2016)**

Item No. 9 on the October 18, 2016 Agenda is a motion by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas to direct the Chief Executive Officer to send a five-signature letter to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Julian Castro to request that Los Angeles County be allocated a fair share of annual Federal resources dedicated to homeless veterans, including an additional allocation of 154 vouchers in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016 through the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program; send a five-signature letter to the County's Congressional Delegation asking them to support an appropriation of \$75 million for HUD-VASH vouchers in FFY 2017, and the County's request of a fair share of annual Federal resources dedicated to homeless veterans, including an additional allocation of 154 HUD-VASH vouchers in Fiscal Year 2016; and continue to monitor and include this issue in the legislative update reports to the Board.

#### **Background**

The HUD-VASH Program combines tenant-based voucher assistance for homeless veterans with VA-funded case management, health, and supportive services. Housing vouchers are critically important for reducing homelessness among veterans by providing them with vouchers to obtain affordable rental housing. Congress annually appropriated \$75 million to fund new HUD-VASH vouchers in FFYs 2010 through 2015

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before reducing their funding to \$60 million in FFY 2016. President Obama did not request any funding for new HUD-VASH vouchers in FFY 2017. The Senate FFY 2017 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill (S. 2844) would reduce funding for HUD-VASH vouchers to \$50 million while the House version (H.R. 5394) eliminates its funding.

Since FFY 2008, annual appropriations language has provided that the allocation of tenant-based HUD-VASH vouchers to public housing agencies (PHAs) be based on the geographical need for vouchers and the PHA's administrative performance. However, Los Angeles County's and City's PHAs, which serve the Los Angeles Continuum of Care (CoC), historically have received a low percentage share of tenant-based HUD-VASH vouchers relative to need, as measured by the number of unsheltered homeless veterans -- those who live in places not meant for human habitation, such as sidewalks, parks, bus stations, cars, and abandoned buildings. The unsheltered homeless have greater needs and are less likely to have access to services than the sheltered homeless, who live in supervised shelters, transitional housing, or hotels and motels paid by public or private nonprofit entities. Moreover, in annual Point in Time (PIT) homeless counts, unsheltered homeless veterans are far more likely to be undercounted than those who are sheltered.

In FFY 2015, the County's and City's PHAs received 715 HUD-VASH vouchers (7.5 percent) even though the Los Angeles CoC had 2,557 unsheltered homeless veterans, which represented 14.3 percent of all unsheltered homeless veterans in the United States, based on the then available 2014 PIT homeless count. The City and County's PHAs have received only 436 (or 8.1 percent) of all FFY 2016 HUD-VASH vouchers awarded to date, compared to the Los Angeles CoC's even higher 17.0 percent share of all unsheltered homeless veterans in the 2015 PIT homeless count.

This year, the Board and the County's Washington, D.C. advocates have been pursuing the appropriation of \$75 million in FFY 2017 for HUD-VASH vouchers, and more equitable allocation of HUD-VASH vouchers to PHAs in geographical areas with the largest number of homeless veterans, especially those who are unsheltered. Senator Feinstein, who serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee, has been responsive to the County's concerns. She has pursued funding for new HUD-VASH vouchers in FFY 2017 and Senate appropriations report language directing HUD to expedite the reallocation of HUD-VASH vouchers from PHAs which declare that they no longer need them to PHAs in communities, such as Los Angeles, that need more vouchers. In addition, Senator Feinstein has requested that HUD allocate an additional 154 vouchers to the County's and City's PHAs to ensure that our area receives its fair share of vouchers and can expand its efforts to end homelessness among veterans.

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### **Conclusion**

Sending five-signature letters requesting the fair share allocation of Federal resources dedicated to homeless veterans, including the allocation of an additional 154 HUD-VASH vouchers to Los Angeles County in FFY 2016, and supporting an appropriation of \$75 million for HUD-VASH vouchers in FFY 2017, is consistent with the County's advocacy efforts to secure additional HUD-VASH vouchers with which to assist homeless veterans. **Support for this motion also is consistent with the Board-approved policies in the County's Federal Legislative Agenda which support increased funding for homeless assistance programs, additional resources for meeting the housing and related supportive service needs of special populations, such as veterans, and funding which would increase rental housing opportunities for low and moderate income individuals and families.**

We will continue to keep you advised.

SAH:JJ:MR  
MT:ma

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel